

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /055 W
----- 126295

R 031519Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8824

AMEMBASSY DACCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03203

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BG, UK

SUBJECT: KAMAL HOSSEIN: BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER
IN NAME ONLY?

REF: DACCA 1002

1. FCO SOUTH ASIAN DEPARTMENT HEAD CHALMERS CONFIRMED TO US SUSPICIONS EXPRESSED REFTEL THAT KAMAL HOSSEIN MAY NEVER RETURN TO HIS JOB AS BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER, WHEN WE SAW HIM FEBRUARY 28, IN COMPANY WITH INR SOUTH ASIAN DIRECTOR HOWELLS WHO WAS VISITING HERE.

2. AS EVIDENCE, CHALMERS CITED THAT HOSSEIN HAS MOVED INTO AN APARTMENT IN OXFORD WITH HIS FAMILY INCLUDING HIS MOTHER, CONTRARY TO USUAL PRACTICE FOR VISITING FELLOWS AT ALL SOULS COLLEGE. CHALMERS KNOWS THAT HOSSEIN HAS ALSO CONSIDERED PURCHASING A HOUSE NEAR OXFORD, IF HE WERE TO FIND PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT THERE. HOSSEIN HAS BEEN AFTER A PROMINENT PROFESSOR OF LONDON UNIVERSITY FOR A READERSHIP IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AT THAT UNIVERSITY STARTING IN 1976. HE HAS INQUIRED IF HE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PRACTICE AT THE BAR WHILE TEACHING THERE. ALTHOUGH ORIGINAL PROPOSAL FOR OXFORD FELLOWSHIP WAS PUT IN TERMS OF HOSSEIN MAKING FREQUENT TRIPS BACK AND FORTH TO HANDLE AFFAIRS IN DACCA AS WELL, HOSSEIN HAS SHOWN NO INTEREST IN GOING BACK. CHALMERS' CONFIDENTIAL

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INQUIRIES AS TO HOSSEIN'S PROBABLE RETURN TO BANGLADESH

HAVE ELICITED ONLY VAGUE REPLY FROM HIGH COMMISSION HERE.

WHEN DEPUTY UNDER
SECRETARY WILFORD HAS COMPLETED UK-INDIAN CONSULTATIONS
IN NEW DELHI MARCH 6 TO 10 (LONDON 2869) HE PLANS TWO-
DAY STOPOVER IN DACCA FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS THERE. IT
WOULD BE NORMAL FOR HOSSEIN TO BE PRESENT. YET BENGALLEES
HAVE INDICATED THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY WILL HANDLE THESE
DISCUSSIONS IN HOSSEIN'S ABSENCE.

4. BRITISH ARE NOT HAPPY WITH EXTENSIVE LOBBYING AGAINST
AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREE TO BHUTTO CARRIED ON BY HOSSEIN
EVEN THOUGH BENGALLEE HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON KEPT OUT
OF IT. VISITING PAKISTANI OFFICIAL SHAHI TOLD BRITISH
THAT HOSSEIN'S ACTIVITY HAS BEEN NOTED AND REGRETTED BY
BHUTTO. CHALMERS SUGGESTED THIS WOULD REDUCE HOSSEIN'S
FUTURE USEFULNESS AS FOREIGN MINISTER.

5. IN SHORT, THOUGH THINGS MAY CHANGE, BRITISH ARE
FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT HOSSEIN HAS NO INTENTION OF RETURN-
ING TO HIS JOB.

RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON03203
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750074-0222
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750389/aaaadcgg.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 DACCA 1002
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <30 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA, 3.4.X6, (HMG SOURCE)>; RELEASED <03 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KAMAL HOSSEIN: BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER IN NAME ONLY?
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BG, UK, (HOSSAIN, KAMAL)
To: STATE DACCA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006